

EPA - 30 YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS

1970 President Richard Nixon signs the National Environmental Policy Act, requiring a comprehensive environmental review for every large project approved or funded by the federal government. 20 million people celebrate the first Earth Day. The Clean Air Act is amended, creating stringent anti-pollution laws, setting auto emissions standards, and requiring state plans to achieve standards. The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency is created with 5,000 employees and a \$1.3 billion budget. EPA Region III is established with offices in Philadelphia and laboratories in Annapolis, Md., and Wheeling, W.Va. First Regional Administrator is Edward W. Furia, Jr. **1971** Congress restricts lead-based paints in residences and bans lead paint on cribs and toys. **1972** Clean Water Act is passed, reducing pollution from point sources. DDT is banned. Manufacturers required to supply toxicological information and register pesticides. Canada and the U.S. agree to clean up the Great Lakes. Representatives of 114 countries meet in Stockholm, Sweden in first global environmental conference. **1973** Congress passes Endangered Species Act. 80 nations sign treaty to protect endangered species and wild flora and fauna. EPA begins to phase out lead in gasoline. Energy crisis grips the world, exacerbated by an Arab nations oil embargo. **1974** Theory is published on how chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) destroy the stratospheric ozone layer, which protects Earth from ultraviolet radiation. Congress passes the Safe Drinking Water Act. **1975** Car makers begin installing catalytic converters in new vehicles. **1976** Congress mandates cradle-to-grave regulation of hazardous waste. President Gerald Ford mandates phase-out of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). **1977** National energy plan of President Jimmy Carter focuses on conservation and renewable, non-polluting energy resources. **1978** EPA and other agencies ban CFCs as a propellant in most aerosol cans. **1979** An accident at Three Mile Island, near Harrisburg, Pa., increases public debate about the safety of nuclear power. EPA withdraws Agent Orange from the U.S. market. **1980** Congress passes the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, known as Superfund. **1981** Interagency task force reports that acid rain is intensifying in the Northeastern U.S. and Canada and outlines a 10-year global research plan. **1982** Congress passes laws to provide long-term, safe disposal of nuclear waste from power plants and weapon production. **1983** The Chesapeake Bay Agreement signed outlining cleanup actions to rid the Bay of water pollution from sewage treatment plants, urban runoff and agricultural activities. **1984** Union Carbide plant accident in Bhopal, India releases methyl isocyanate, killing more than 2,000 people. **1985** Union Carbide plant at Institute, W.Va., releases methyl isocyanate, bringing home the concept that communities in the U. S. are at risk from chemical releases. British scientists report a giant "hole" in the ozone layer is opening up each spring over the Antarctic. **1986** Congress increases Superfund to \$8.5 billion, creates mechanisms to speed cleanups. Reactor explodes at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the former Soviet Union, resulting in the worst accidental release of radioactive materials in history. Thousands die, 450,000 are evacuated within a 30-square-kilometer area. **1987** Clean Water Act sets state water quality standards. 24 nations commit to phase out production of CFCs. Yucca Mountain, Nevada is selected as the disposal site for the nation's radioactive waste. **1988** Congress bans ocean dumping of sewage sludge and industrial waste.

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EPA and the Surgeon General urge every homeowner to test for radon gas, a cause of lung cancer. **1989** Exxon Valdez spills nearly 11 million gallons of crude oil into Alaska's Prince William Sound. EPA announces TRI database which tells the public which toxic chemicals are being released from specific industrial facilities. New York State declares parts of Love Canal area habitable and sales of homes begin. **1990** Some 200 million people participate in 20th anniversary of Earth Day. EPA becomes the lead federal agency to promote, support, and encourage environmental education for people of all ages. Clean Air Act amended **1991** Environmental justice national summit of grassroots groups held in Washington, D.C. **1992** 35,000 people from 178 countries attend the United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. **1993** EPA reports secondhand smoke poses a serious health risk to nonsmokers. EPA implements strategy governing hazardous waste incinerators and industrial furnaces. Curbside recycling triples from 7% in 1970 to nearly 22% in 1993. **1994** The American bald eagle is upgraded from an endangered to threatened species. President Clinton orders government agencies to make environmental justice part of their mission. Superfund cleanups accelerated, resulting in as many cleanups in 12 months as were completed in program's first decade. Brownfields program launched, with grants to communities to revitalize abandoned, contaminated inner-city sites and return them to productive use. List of toxic chemicals reported to public under community right-to-know law doubles. **1995** Region III archives more than 3,000 sites of concern, removing liability barriers and encouraging the redevelopment and reuse of these properties. EPA ensures that cleanup actions reflect cost-effective technological advances. Updating remedies at Superfund sites save potentially responsible parties and the program more than \$1 billion. EPA requires municipal incinerators to reduce toxic emissions by 90%. Project XL Initiative launched: companies, facilities, states and localities develop innovative ways to achieve results in common-sense and cost-effective ways. **1996** The Safe Drinking Water Act is revised to require public water suppliers tell customers what's in their water, where it comes from and how it meets water quality standards. Sellers and landlords must disclose lead-based paint to buyers or renters. Real estate agents share responsibility for compliance; Lord Shope Landfill, Pa., is the 400th Superfund construction completion in the nation. The Food Quality Protection Act requires reasonable certainty of no harm from pesticides used on foods. **1997** EPA Administrator Carol Browner creates Office of Children's Health Protection. American Heritage Rivers Initiative is launched to help communities restore and revitalize waters and waterfronts. **1998** Clean Water Action Plan announced to have local, state, and federal organizations and agencies work together to fulfill the goal of fishable and swimmable waters for all Americans. Underground storage tanks must meet strict requirements for spill, overfill, and corrosion protection. **1999** The Revere Chemical Company becomes the nation's 600th Superfund completion. The Environmental Science Center opens at Fort Meade, Md., featuring green building technologies, energy-saving lighting, and an environmentally-friendly climate control system. Nationally, 650 Superfund or half of all site cleanups are completed. Radon testing is required to buy a home in most states. Occupants living in pre-1978 multi-family housing must be notified prior to any renovation. **2000** Signing of the new Chesapeake 2000 agreement.